

for
Weisberg

16 March 70

Dear Howard:

This is in response to your question whether .22 rimfire could have been used from the front of JFK (your letter of 12 March). That is out of the question for a shot delivered from the right front to the head. .22 rimfire cannot cause that kind of movement nor anything remotely resembling that kind of damage. Too light in weight, and way too slow in velocity.

The front neck wound is not out of the realm of possibility for 22 rimfire, but it barely qualifies on that score. It would produce a skin wound like what the Parkland docs describe, but I doubt whether it could produce "great amount of contusion"-- bleeding would not be bad unless it ruptured a major artery. Since you can't posit a range closer than the concrete wall on the knoll-- and make even farther back than that-- I would say almost without equivocation that a 22 rimfire would not burst into several small fragments-- not even if it hit bone. It just does not have that kind of whallop.

Besides, only a fool would use a 22 rimfire on a human or on any large animal with the hope of killing it. Even the most powerful of 22 rimfires (with the exception of the .22 RemWin. Magnum) are pipsqueaks. No one who knows of guns would even contemplate it for the job that you have in mind.

Moreover, the report of rifles firing .22 rimfires is relatively slight. ~~xxxx~~ Just a loud, but not uncomfortable, "pop".

The .22 varminters that I referred to previously use bullets of about the same size as the .22 rimfires. I believe that the .22 Long Rifle (rimfire) uses a 45 grain bullet. The .22 varminters use bullets of 50-55 grains weight, normally. Small fragments of this in the neck could account for the whole bullet; but with the center-fires, I would look for evidence also of the bullet jacket. The rimfires are not jacketed-- depending on the manufacturer, they may be coated so that they look jacketed, but that coating is not a jacket.

The velocity of the .22 Long Rifle (probably the cartridge that your friend showed you) is-- I think** about 1200 feet per second. The 22 center-fires range from 2700 fps to 4000 fps.

In writing, it is not proper for you to cite me as a reference for technical data. Whatever your opinion of me may be, I do not have a reputation as an expert. Much of what I tell you is available in printed sources. Search them out and cite them as authorities. Or get yourself a real expert. I appreciate consideration, but you hurt yourself if you cite me as an authority.

Must stop. ~~Stay well~~ Stay well.

cc Weisberg

Rich